



Bringing back the birds

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY'S RESOLUTION ON FREE-ROAMING CATS

WHEREAS tens of millions of free-roaming domestic cats (*Felis catus*), including owned, stray (lost or abandoned by their owners), or feral (descendants of strays and shunning all human contact) are non-native predators and exist in significant densities throughout most areas populated by humans in the United States; and

WHEREAS free-roaming domestic cats are efficient predators estimated to kill billions of native birds and small mammals, as well as countless reptiles and amphibians each year; and

WHEREAS free-roaming domestic cats are subject to pain, suffering, and early death, such as from debilitating and potentially fatal diseases, being hit by cars, poisoning, attacks by other animals, or being lost or stolen; and

WHEREAS bites, scratches, and fecal contamination from free-roaming cats pose a health risk to the general public through transmission of diseases such as toxoplasmosis, roundworm, cat-scratch fever, and rabies; and

WHEREAS "managed" cat colonies, wherein cats are trapped, tested, vaccinated, altered (spayed or neutered), released, and fed, neither eliminate predation on native wildlife nor protect cats from outdoor hazards and encourage people to release their cats into the outdoors; and

WHEREAS government wildlife agencies are charged with the management, conservation, and preservation of native fauna, but few have regulations or public policies to protect native fauna from free-roaming cats;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that American Bird Conservancy:

- calls for all cats to be kept indoors or under close supervision and the humane removal of all free-roaming cats beginning with areas important to wildlife;
- opposes human behavior permitting cats to roam free;
- supports programs to neuter or spay cats before reaching reproductive age, register cats, and encourage owners to keep their cats indoors;
- strongly opposes free-roaming cat colonies;



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- will work with the scientific, conservation, and animal welfare communities to educate the public about the dangers that free-roaming cats pose to birds and other native wildlife and the hazards to free-roaming cats;
- urges local, state, and federal wildlife agencies, public health organizations, legislative bodies, and the public to:
 - (1) ban and eliminate free-roaming cat colonies through humane capture by animal care and control facilities; and
 - (2) require the licensure of all cats and prohibit free-roaming cats by adopting laws similar to those in existence for dogs.

APPROVED BY THE AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY BOARD; September 17, 1997